



United States Senator  
**Richard Shelby**  
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



## **Employee Free Choice Act Op-Ed**

*By: Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)*

Alabama's economy is better today than I have ever seen it. Numerous new businesses have chosen Alabama to base operations over the past several years, bringing thousands of new jobs and keeping Alabama's unemployment rate at one of the lowest in the nation--3.3 percent. While this growth has given me great hope for our state's economic future, we must continue to work to create the economic conditions that let the rest of the world know that Alabama is open for business. This includes building infrastructure, keeping taxes low and fair, and allowing free choice for our workers. For these reasons I do not, and will not, support the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act," a recently passed House of Representatives bill that radically alters the existing process for worker unionization.

Under the current collective bargaining system, workers can form unions through a process similar to how U.S. citizens vote for political candidates. Union organizers may speak with workers and ask for their support in bringing about a vote to unionize; however, employers and workers have the opportunity to ensure that the final decision is made through a secret ballot vote. This process removes any outside pressure from the ultimate outcome.

The proposed legislation would allow union organizers to ask workers to sign their ballot cards in the open -- publicizing their vote and creating an awkward and potentially intimidating environment. Once a majority of a company's employees express consent by signing voting cards, the union would automatically be certified as the bargaining agent for all the workers. This legislation takes away workers' voting privacy and exposes them to the outside pressure of the union organizers who are the distributors and collectors of the vote cards. Eliminating the right to a secret ballot is the antithesis of democracy and not an appropri-

ate way for labor to organize. Therefore, I will continue to support a secret ballot for Alabama's workers and oppose the "Employee Free Choice Act."

While this legislation was aggressively pushed through the U.S. House of Representatives on a clear party-line vote, it is my hope that the majority of my colleagues in the Senate will join me in opposing this harmful bill that will only serve to undercut the great strides Alabama's workers have made to boost the economy in recent years. Recently, I co-signed a letter to Senate leadership expressing my opposition to the "Employee Free Choice Act." It was signed with enough other members of the Senate to prevent the bill's passage.

Alabama has a robust economy in large part due to our tremendous workforce. We are a right-to-work state, neither forcing nor prohibiting participation in a union. Instead of creating new federal laws that favor power grabs by the unions, we need to build on our already strong economy which has attracted numerous new companies to make investments in Alabama. From the Mercedes plant in Tuscaloosa to the Honda plant in Lincoln and from the Hyundai plant in Montgomery to the EADS facility in Mobile, successful businesses recognize that Alabama is a smart place to do business and that our workers are some of the best in the world. We must continue to create further opportunities in our state and focus on working to attract even more new businesses and jobs, rather than taking rights away from Alabama's workers. Alabama workers have partnered with business and together they have created a vibrant economy. The so-called "Employee Free Choice Act" would do nothing but harm our workers, our businesses, and our economy.

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**FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: MAY 14, 2007**



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